In *Defend Sacred Mountains*, a suite of Edgar Heap of Birds’ text prints calls attention and rallies resistance to the desecration of four mountains that are sacred to Native Americans: Bear’s House/Devils Tower, Wyoming; San Francisco Peaks, near Flagstaff, Arizona; Bear Butte, South Dakota; and Mauna Kea, Hawaii. Edgar Heap of Birds documents the history of the sites and the struggle over land rights connected with these four mountains in 64 monoprints that reveal how lands venerated by Native Americans are being plundered. It is this cultural contempt against which Edgar Heap of Birds is crusading.

*Defend Sacred Mountains* is co-curated by Pitzer Galleries Director Ciara Ennis and Pitzer Professor of Art Bill Anthes, whose 2015 book *Edgar Heap of Birds* was the first book-length study of the Cheyenne-Arapaho artist.

“*Defend Sacred Mountains*’ message is ecological, spiritual and political,” Anthes and Ennis say. “Pitzer College Art Galleries is helping Edgar Heap of Birds deliver that message.”
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

In a white-on-red monoprint bearing the words MOUNT RUSH MORE POUND SPIKES IN, Heap of Birds draws a parallel between Mt. Rushmore, where it’s forbidden to climb the famous rock faces, and Bear’s House, commonly known as Devils Tower, an 875-foot-tall butte that has been a sacred site to Northern Great Plains Native Americans for thousands of years and today is visited by more than 5,000 climbers annually.

Heap of Birds similarly calls attention to waste water runoff that soaks the land where members of the Diné/Navajo tribes gather medicinal and ceremonial plants near the San Francisco Peaks in Arizona. He rebukes the aftermath of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally that unfolds on the hallowed land around Bear Butte in South Dakota, and sets his sights on the telescopes planted on the summit of Mauna Kea, one of the most sacred places in the Hawaiian Islands.

The artist sums up the unifying theme of Defend Sacred Mountains in his monoprint that reads: “WE ARE LAND LAND IS US.”

In the current climate, Heap of Birds’s print series resonates powerfully with ongoing efforts to protect other tribal lands, most notably, the efforts of the Standing Rock Sioux to block construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline (DAPL), and other recent events that have thrust indigenous efforts to self-determination into the mainstream, including the Idle No More movement that began in Canada in 2012 and spread to the United States. Moreover, Idle No More, the struggle for Standing Rock, and the protest movements that Heap of Birds references in Defend Sacred Mountains, connect with the by Black Lives Matter and the ongoing work to defend the rights of women, immigrants, the disabled, and LGBTQ communities, remind us of the difficult work of reckoning with the foundational violence and structural inequalities of our nations’ histories. Heap of Birds writes, “These four themes of compassion towards earth, spirit and respect from humankind, in mono print exhibition form, seems appropriate to deepen and continue the investigation, caring and relationship of art and the environment.”

In addition to the 64 monoprints, the exhibition comprises four timelines, which details the history of each site along with the indigenous activism connected with the mountains. The timelines are produced in vinyl and set in dialogue with the rest of the show.

FEE
$6,000 per 8 weeks period, plus shipping

NUMBER OF WORKS:
- 64 monoprints, unframed
- Digital file with four historical timelines
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

SPACE REQUIREMENTS:
Approximately: 400-700 linear feet

PUBLICATION:
*Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains* (Pitzer College Art Galleries, 2018)

LECTURES: Curators available

CONTACT:
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SELECTED REVIEWS AND NEWS:
[LA Times](https://www.latimes.com), Carolina A. Miranda, February 14, 2018

[Visual Art Source](https://www.visualartsource.com), Kathy Zimmerer, February 2018

CAPTIONS:
Defend Sacred Mountains, Mauna Kea, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints

Defend Sacred Mountains, San Francisco Peaks, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints

Defend Sacred Mountains, Bear's House, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints

Defend Sacred Mountains, Bear Butte, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints

Timeline of Mauna Kea, San Francisco Peaks, Bear's House and Bear Butte, installation dimensions variable, Vinyl

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The exhibition is organized by Pitzer College Art Galleries. The exhibition is curated by Bill Anthes, Professor of Art History at Pitzer College, and Ciara Ennis, Director and Curator at Pitzer College Art Galleries. The exhibition is generously supported in part by the Pitzer College’s Office of the Dean of Faculty, Agnes Moreland Jackson Diversity Program Fund/Campus Life Committee, the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability, and the Murray Pepper and Vicki Reynolds Pepper Distinguished Visiting Artists and Scholars Endowed Fund.
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

Installation at Pitzer College Art Galleries
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

Detail of *Defend Sacred Mountains, Mauna Kea*, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints
Detail of *Defend Sacred Mountains, San Francisco Peaks*, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints
Poverty
Sadness
For
Which
It
Stands

Detail of *Defend Sacred Mountains, Bear's House*, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

Detail of *Defend Sacred Mountains, Bear Butte*, 120 x 44 inches, Ink on rag paper, monoprints
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

Artist Biography

Edgar Heap of Birds is a professor of Native American studies at the University of Oklahoma and has just been awarded an honorary PhD from California Institute for the Arts (2181). Heap of Birds is a citizen of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma whose art decries the colonization of indigenous lands and expresses Native American claims to sovereignty. His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Smithsonian Institution and the Hong Kong Art Center. He has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation, among other institutions. In 2012, Heap of Birds was recognized as one of 50 of “America’s most accomplished and innovative artists” when he won a United States Artists Ford Fellowship in the visual arts.

Curator Biographies:

Bill Anthes is a Professor in the Art Field Group at Pitzer College, where he teaches and writes about art in terms of multimedia practice and intercultural exchange. His current research focuses on global indigenous modern and contemporary art in the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific, decolonial methodologies for art history in settler nations such as the United States, Canada, South African, Australia, and New Zealand, and artistic engagements with animals and nonhuman nature. He is author of the books Native Moderns: American Indian Painting, 1940-1960 (Duke University Press, 2006) and Edgar Heap of Birds (Duke University Press, 2015), and he is contributing author to the textbook Reframing Photography: Theory and Practice, by Rebekah Modrak (Routledge, 2010). Anthes has received fellowships and awards from the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Research Center, the Center for the Arts in Society at Carnegie Mellon University, the Rockefeller Foundation/Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and the Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant Program. His essays and reviews have been published in American Indian Quarterly, Art Papers, Art Journal, Exposure, Journal of the West, Number: An Independent Journal of the Arts, Visual Anthropology Review and other periodicals, as well as numerous anthologies and exhibition catalogs, and he is a member of the Editorial Board of the journal American Indian Quarterly. Anthes earned master’s degree in Art History from the University of Colorado and a PhD in American Studies from the University of Minnesota.

Ciara Ennis is director and curator of Pitzer College Art Galleries. Her curatorial practice explores identity, narrative, and representation and the intersection of art, politics, and activism. Recent exhibitions include The Racial Imaginary (2015), artists articulating race in various
Edgar Heap of Birds: Defend Sacred Mountains

media; *Wunderkammer* (2015), a reappraisal of curation and artist inclusion; *Andrea Bowers: #sweetjane* (2014), the media fascination with sexual brutality; *Charles Gaines: In the Shadow of Numbers* (2012), an annotated retrospective; *Synthetic Ritual* (2011), artists’ habituation of the bizarre; and *Capitalism in Question*, co-curated with Daniel Joseph Martinez (2010). Additionally, Ennis has been a panelist/moderator/guest speaker for the American Studies Association, the International Sculpture Conference, the AAMG conference, the California Community Foundation, and the Riksakademie Amsterdam. Ennis received her master’s degree in contemporary curating from the Royal College of Art in London and is currently a PhD candidate in cultural studies (museum studies concentration) at Claremont Graduate University.

Pitzer College Art Galleries

The Pitzer College Art Galleries’ mandate is Education and Advocacy through the Pitzer College core values—social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, student engagement, and environmental sustainability. By following these precepts, the Pitzer College Art Galleries engage and interrogate contemporary and historical issues of importance to expand our audiences’ understanding and contribution to our artistic, intellectual, and social culture.